

# **Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission**

**Minutes of January 16, 2009**

## **Quarterly Meeting**

**The meeting was called to order by Susan Baxter, Chair at 8:34 am**

### **Commissioners & Designees Attending**

**Baxter, Susan – Chair**

**Barge, Denise**

**Bodington, Susan**

**Cola, Jeanne**

**Fields, Barbara**

**Flynn, Kevin**

**Grenon, Paul**

**Hajian, Kaveh**

**Hammarström, David**

**Hannifan, Chris**

**Kiesel, Marilyn**

**Kravitz, Tom**

**McGunagle, Joanne**

**Ryczek, Jim**

**Sekeres, Bonnie**

**Tierney, Terence**

**Torrice, Joyce**

**Van Noppen, Mark**

**Walsh, Peter**

**Staff:**

**Coleman, Marcy**

**Costa, Maria**

**DeLos Santos, Doris**

**Kue, Simon**

**Neirinckx, Ray**

**Shawcross, Noreen**

**Tondra, Michael**

**Guests**

**Nellie Gorbea**

**Julia Davidson**

**Approval of October 17, 2008 Minutes**

**Barbara Fields moved acceptance. David Hammarström seconded.**

**Minutes approved.**

**Report of Chair**

**Susan began her report by informing the commission of the ground**

breaking for Dayton Court, a SWAP bond funded development on the Southside of Providence. She encouraged commission members to attend as many ground breaking/ribbon cutting events as possible. To actually see the finished product is truly a satisfying feeling. The hard work we all do results in great development projects.

The Neighborhood Stabilization Program plan was approved for \$19,600,000 in funds. RI was one of the first states to receive approval. Many of the commissioners were present at the December announcement which gave the State of RI the opportunity to thank US Senator Jack Reed who was the primary advocate for the inclusion of the NSP. In addition, Noreen praised Mike Tondra and Susan Bodington for their efforts and commitment to this program.

- The CDBG program will work in partnership with RI Housing and the state's municipalities to administer this funding to target neighborhoods most impacted by foreclosures.
- There were a number of workshops to receive input on the HUD required plan.
- HRC staff will probably have a number of opportunities to leverage BHRI funds, anticipated in fiscal 2010, to rehabilitate identified foreclosed properties.
- Foreclosure and stimulus funds may be available in the coming months, the HRC will certainly welcome the opportunity to direct policy and planning related to these resources.

**Appointments and Reappointments:** A request will be sent to the Governor for reappointment of Tom Kravitz and Bonnie Sekeres. David Hammarström, Barbara Fields and Mark Van Noppen have reached term limits. There will be communication with constituencies/organizations for suggestions of replacements. An HRC slot for a building official remains vacant. Tom Kravitz suggested that Burrillville's building official may be interested in serving on the Commission. Noreen reported that efforts have been made to fill this vacant slot but no names have been recommended. Noreen was directed to contact all cities and towns for recommendations.

**Budget 2010:** We have not been impacted by the supplemental budget and have not yet received our targets for next year.

**Meeting Calendar for 2009:** Susan reminded commissioners to enter dates of meetings on their calendars.

Noreen informed the Commission that the first meeting of the HRC was in February 1999. She would like to have a small celebration for this milestone. David Hammarström offered MetLife. Others felt that it should be held at one of the sites that we had funded. Jeanne Cola added that she thinks having a press release/press at this celebration would be a good gesture and also suggested having a small committee to plan the 10 year announcement. Something in February/early March will be planned.

**Resolution to Approve for Publication: Expedited Permit Regulations**  
Noreen presented the Commissioners with changes and minor edits to the regulations. There was considerable discussion of other style changes for clarity on pages 3-7.

**Changes accepted were:**

**Adding a definition for Proforma;**

**Adding “LMIH” after reference to Low and Moderate Income Housing;**

**Specifying that application form “must” be obtained from HRC;**

**Specifying that time limits are “business days” or “calendar days” depending upon section.**

There was also significant discussion about percentage versus number in setting up an expedited process. The language was not clear. The actual intent of this process is to expedite development in the 29 cities & towns not at the 10%. DEM, CRMC, EDC all have asked for a high enough threshold to reduce the amount of applications under the law.

**Motion to approve the resolution authorizing publication for public comment was made by Bonnie Sekeres, seconded by Peter Walsh.**

Following extensive discussion, Peter Walsh moved to amend the resolution to allow for a special meeting. Noreen expressed concern about the delay in publication which may be of concern to the sponsor, Senator Miller. The amendment was withdrawn.

**The motion was tabled for a group to re-work the language. Marcy Coleman, Kevin Flynn, Bonnie Sekeres, Kaveh Hajian gathered and reworded the language. Marcy Coleman presented the commission with the new wording. The following was presented:**

**(iv) (a) In a community that has not reached its 10% goal, or in a community that is exempt due to rental housing stock, that the Project meets a minimum of 5% of the LMIH units needed, as determined by Rhode Island Housing pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-55-5.3 et seq.; or**

**(b) In a community that has reached its 10% goal, that the Project adds at least 5% additional LMIH units to the existing LMIH stock, as determined by Rhode Island Housing pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-55-5.3 et seq.**

**(v) To qualify for expedited permitting, a project must provide at least 10 LMIH units. Any project that provides at least 40 units of LMIH housing shall be eligible for expedited permitting regardless of location.**

**Motion approved. Thomas Kravitz voted no.**

## **Discussion Regarding Report on Status of Implementation of Approved Affordable Housing Plans**

**There has been a problem with getting accurate numbers for our annual report on the progress of affordable housing plans. RI Housing uses the calendar year with a due date of 2/15; the HRC**

reports on the fiscal year with the due date of 12/31. A letter was proposed to request a change to the HRC reporting date to 2/15 to coincide with RI Housing.

Terry Tierney asked how disputes are handled when a town's number and the RIH number do not match. There is the opportunity for municipalities review and confirm numbers.

David asked why not two tracks; two sets of data for two purposes? Noreen responded that it would be best to use a single number.

Susan Bodington did not think that the HRC actually had to provide the number, just a record of progress. Noreen will look at changing what we are reporting.

Bonnie Sekeres moved to make changes in the reporting process. Peter Walsh seconded. Motion passed.

### **Update on Initiatives in Plan to End Homelessness**

So far, there are an adequate number of shelters bed for the homeless during the winter months. Crossroads is willing to accept more people. There is a plan in place to open other facilities if needed. Family Shelters are doing well. Vouchers for families are available for motels/hotel during the very cold days.

Noreen recognized the work of Darlene with Project Homeless

**Connect, a “one-stop shopping” service event. This is very important work done each fall.**

**Harrington Hall is in very poor condition and inadequate for 85 men, but at present, we have no alternative.**

**The Housing First Program, which was a pilot with the United Way, is going very well and is housing over 100 people who were homeless for years.**

**Susan Baxter recognized the Commission’s efforts to address homelessness.**

## **BHRI Process**

**We have put the process in writing to clarify the work.**

## **BHRI and NOP updates**

**Sue Bodington informed the commission that every project is kept on a tracking sheet and reviewed monthly. A report is sent to Noreen.**

**There are only a handful of older projects.**

**A summary sheet will be sent out to the commissioners.**

## **Public Comment Period**



**Jeanne Cola announced a Community Champion round on Housing with a \$25,000 award through Citizens Bank.**

**Bonnie mentioned the impact of the Medicaid waiver on small nursing homes/assisted living sites.**

**The meeting adjourned at 10:50 am. The next meeting is March 13, 2009.**